

2004 HARVEST CELEBRATION FARM TOUR

In today's Puget Sound Food System, the majority of the food we eat travels many miles to reach us while the beautiful farmland that surrounds us rapidly disappears. As a result, urban residents are finding it harder to connect to local food sources. WSU King County Extension is helping to improve this situation by making local farms more accessible. For the past five years Extension's Harvest Celebration Farm Tour has brought thousands of people out to King County Farms. 2004 was no exception.



On October 2nd, twenty-three King County farms welcomed Puget Sound residents, inviting them to experience the productivity and abundance of King County's small-acreage, diversified agriculture. The tour gave these farmers a chance to share their considerable knowledge and benefit from increased contact with the public. Families enjoyed a variety of fun activities on farms in both north and south King County as well as on Vashon Island and learned about the importance of our local food system.

Featured Events on the 2004 Tour

More than 5500 people visited the many different farms on the October 2nd tour to experience local fruit and vegetable production, pick their own pumpkins, pet sheep, alpacas and other livestock, press their own cider, run through a corn maze or take a hayride.

In addition, this year's tour featured a variety of special events to entice the public to visit local farms and provide additional learning opportunities to make the links to Puget Sound agriculture stronger.

Kick-off Event with Salmon Creek Elementary

In order to reach more people than ever before, the 2004 farm tour kicked off with a special event at Fall City Farm on September 30th. Nearly, 150 students, 7 teachers, and 15 parent chaperones from Salmon Creek Elementary School in White Center were transported from the city to



A little one picks out her pumpkin at Serres Farm in Redmond

Photo D. Meyer



Milling wood at the Vashon Forest Stewards Log Yard, a new addition to this year's tour

Photo S. Kantor

celebrate the harvest and learn about farm work and farm life. Students explored lessons in nutrition and farming while participating in hands-on activities on the family-run farm. We received high marks from both students and teachers, as many of the students had never before had the opportunity to visit a farm. Each student went home with their own pumpkin.

Chef Demonstrations

Farm tour attendees that visited The South 47 Farm in Redmond and Jubilee Farm in Carnation enjoyed demonstrations by some of Seattle's finest chefs. Featured chefs included Jerry Traunfeld of the Herbfarm Restaurant, Scott Samuel of the Seattle Culinary Academy, and Brian Scheehser of the Hunt Club at the Sorrento Hotel. These chefs showed the public that cooking with local organic produce is both easy and fun.

WSU Farm Walk

Many people began their day at Oxbow Organic Farm where WSU Small Farm Team member David Muehleisen led a farm walk. Attendees learned about the elements of sustainable farming and the many challenges facing organic growers.

Farm Fresh Food- It's Closer Than You Think!

THE HARVEST CELEBRATION REACHES ITS GOALS!

Goal 1: Increase public awareness and appreciation for local agriculture and food systems.

More than 20% of the people who responded to our survey indicated that they heard about the tour via word of mouth and nearly 64% said that they would share their Harvest Celebration experience with others, a strong indication that the event is making a lasting impression on people.

Goal 2: Highlight the productivity of small-acreage, diversified farms in King County for the urban population.

Thanks to the Seattle Weekly pull-out, more than 105,000 households learned about the King County tour and other food and farm initiatives going on around the region. As a result, over 50% of our survey respondents were urban residents and more than 35% said that they found out about the tour through the newspaper.

Goal 3: Raise awareness of the threatened state of agricultural lands in King County

More than 70% of our survey respondents reported that they are willing to buy more food directly from local farmers in order to help keep farms viable in King County and over 18% said that they will participate in local agricultural policy discussion as a result of going on the tour.

Goal 4: Educate the public to vote for local farms with their food dollars.

Of the tour attendees that were not already buying local food, nearly 25% reported that they are now very likely to do so.



Beautiful local bounty at Oxbow Organic Farm in Carnation

Photo D. Meyer

"I learned that alpacas have very soft and lovely fleeces."

"It was a fun and interesting day for our entire family- we'll do it again."

"We'll be back next year to visit all of the farms and we plan on bringing more friends with us!"

"We didn't know that farming is such hard work!"

"We learned how simple and beautiful farming can be and how good it is for the community."

- Visitor comments, 2004 Harvest Celebration Farm Tour

PUBLICITY AND SPONSORSHIP

In order to reach a larger urban population, this year's farm tour guide was published in the Seattle Weekly on September 15th. 100,000 copies were delivered through their distribution channels and WSU King County Extension distributed an additional 5000 during September at farmers markets, libraries, and through individual farmers. In addition to maps of each section of the tour, the guide included a letter of support from Ron Sims, descriptions of each farm, tips on how to support local agriculture, and more. Thousands of flyers were also given out around King County and three rounds of press releases were sent out to the Puget Sound media. Articles were published in Parent Map, the King County Journal, the Seattle Weekly, The Woodinville Weekly, and the Seattle Times.

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. This year's sponsors included the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the Puget Sound Fresh Campaign, PCC Natural Markets, From the Heart of Washington, Full Circle Farm, Pioneer Organics, Celilo Group Media, the King/Pierce Farm Bureau, Earth Ministry, The Master Gardener Foundation, Willows Lodge, The Herbfarm Restaurant, The 4-H Foundation, Seattle Tilth, Salish Lodge, Cedar Grove Composting, the Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, Northwest Baby and Child, Thundering Hooves, and Essential Baking. Our fundraising efforts resulted in a donation increase of nearly 200%.

For more information on King County's Harvest Celebration Farm Tour visit our webpage at www.metrokc.gov/wsuc-ce/FarmTour or call 206-205-3206

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Alpacas meet and greet at Three Boy's Alpacas in Kent

Photo G. Cook